Recent changes   Media Manager   Sitemap

Trace: • **the_flotilla**

resilients:the_flotilla

Resilients at a glance

Table of Contents

The Flotilla

Scenario 2 of 4 in response to the question: How do we work together on interesting things? (as part of a scenario planning exercise at FoAM for future_preparedness)
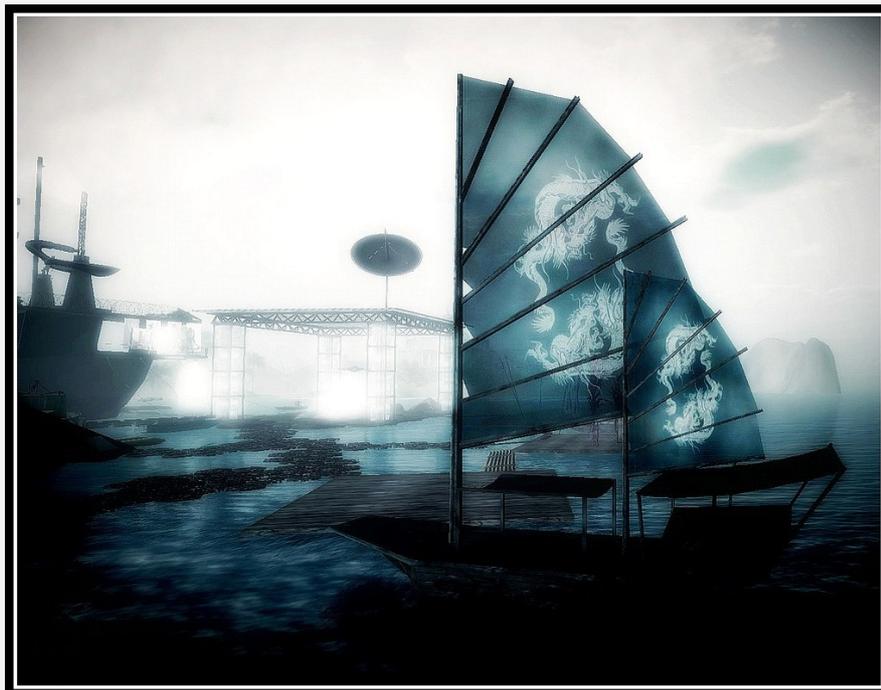
(axis: collective vision and full availability)

Image link: 🌐 Carthalis Rossini's "Snow Crash" set

The world around the flotilla: There are people on the move, migrating across continents and towards mega-cities. The world is awash in information, although proliferation of technology keeps getting into bubbles and crises depending on the oscillating availability of physical resources and cheap labour needed to produce the necessary hardware. A whole range of syndromes (or abilities) keep appearing, as a result of information overload and attention deficit. The insecurity and turbulence are paired with a continued rise in conservatism and an ever increasing bureaucratisation of life and culture. The security theatre keeps adding new props in its effects-range and performing its brutal, splatter-punk scenes on the streets of major cities. More and more people work from home, either due to their environmental concerns, or astronomically expensive fossil fuels, or because a disfunctional infrastructure (that is either overly crowded or non-functional). The technologies for distributed collaboration and augmented reality are getting better each day. Many people outsource menial tasks to either virtual assistants, crowds or artificial companions. Culture and politics are increasingly dominated by rampant consumerism and capitalism, causing a hollowing out of opportunities for experimentation and alternatives.

In this possible future, The Resilients guild with members and cells around the world decides to lift its anchor. There is no security of funding or the status of artists as independent operators. The arts have become radically bureaucratised, reaching Kafka-esque proportions. The cost of living is prohibitively expensive, especially for people without steady jobs and living far away from their families. Individual artistic careers are impossible to attain, except for the select few artists who serve the tastes of the rich and famous. Universities have become machines for producing papers, but education and

research happen elsewhere – in alternative, ad-hoc spaces, in collectives of people eager to learn. Technologists are either brainwashed into a-moral creatures serving the capitalist machinery, or drop out and become sought after hackers, feeding technological resistance movements… Environmentalists are disillusioned by the global apathy and are either growing more radical, or attempt to infiltrate the political and economic systems, just to be slowly swallowed and transformed by them. Small groups of people retreat into a bucolic mirage of intentional communities and village life, where permaculture and new age intermingle into a somewhat escapist mixture.

The members of the Resilients became tired of fighting the windmills and see that the only way forward is to fully commit themselves to the collective vision they've been cultivating over the years and begin growing their own world: The flotilla

The flotilla is a distributed, semi-nomadic troupe sharing a collective vision of the world and their place in it. The vision is emergent and inclusive: it bubbles up from the personalities and activities of its members, but it is more than a sum of its parts – it is the ethos of the group, that bursts from every pore of its matter, responding and adapting to its continuously changing conditions. The flotilla is a a melting pot of cultures and species, renegades and entrepreneurial spirits. Some of them live and work in close physical proximity, perhaps a boat (or a collection of rafts) floating on the rising seas, or a shifting colony resembling an ant hill. Others are distributed around the world, physically distant but otherwise fully present and engaged -sharing the benefits and commitments of the group. Every flotilla member is equipped with a set of (scavenged) augmented reality and nano-technological tools, allowing them full sensory interaction with their team-mates across the globe. Their families – including children, pets and plants are equally connected and participating in the life and work of the flotilla. Access to information and technology is open and free (although this might not be the case everywhere in the world). This is a precondition to the flotilla being able to work in a distributed manner.

There is in fact not much difference between life and work on the flotilla: people's roles are based on their talents and strengths. The work is stimulating and sufficiently challenging to allow the members to learn and grow. Due to the redundancy in the network of people, everyone has sufficient time to relax and 'recharge' on a daily basis. People are supported through a range of services assuring their holistic wellbeing (from a variety of medicinal traditions, to psychologists and coaches, to nutritionists and massage therapists). There is sufficient redundant human capacity in the network, so that no one has to work beyond their individual abilities, which increases the sense of flow. The work of the group is highly transdisciplinary and diverse. The services of the flotilla are manifold (from cooking to coaching, design and engineering (of various flavours) and many other things), but all of them help infuse the collective vision of cultural revitalisation in communities and places they encounter. The flotilla is an entity that produces cultural compost, fertile and full of nutrients for fresh cultures to begin to sprout. In some ways the flotilla can be seen as subscribing to the 'archaic revival' – reaching far back to pre-industrial cultures to restore endangered crafts, technologies and practices, injecting them with post-industrial flavours of openness of sources, non-hierarchical learning, technological innovations, etc.

Material resources (food, materials, energy) are partially generated (grown, harvested, fabricated, cultured) by the flotilla itself, but also shared, exchanged and traded with the individuals, communities and a range of economic entities in its surroundings. Financially, the flotilla generates resources for its members, who are all involved in and committed to fulfilling its collective mission. The finances come (1) from exchanging products and services made by the flotilla, (2) from collaborations with external partners (including funding agencies and foundations) on cultural regeneration projects and (3) from patrons interested in supporting flotilla's vision. The flotilla's members have grown up in a culture of feast and famine and know how to deal with uncertainty of resources. Life is not always financially abundant, but never precariously poor. The resources are sufficient to live a comfortable life.

Responsibility is shared through a clear (bottom-up) governance structure, which helps making the processes and activities effective and contributing towards the emergent vision and assuring its coherence. Leadership exists, but it isn't 'in-your-face'. Locally (in small cells of the flotilla) the governance resembles workers' socialism, globally the leadership is there as the steward of the long term vision. The leadership role is a service to the collective and the vision. It consists of a small group people who are able to 'hold the vision' (and its context) and facilitate its translation into the life and work of the flotilla, are willing to listen to and sense the needs of the collective, as well as coordinate the activities. Leadership is meritocratic, it is rotational and redundant (the tasks and

responsibilities are always overlapping, never dependent on just one person). There is a sense of collective intelligence that makes the flotilla operate almost like a large organism.

Images on http://pinterest.com/deziluzija/resilients-the-flotilla/ pdf of pinterest: the-flotilla.pdf

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Notes from design session

- augmented reality important
- continuous energy supply
- monastery/sect/activist/research institute on a boat
- resources become very important
- wellness – life + work merge
- responsibility is shared – collaboration to build a society
- trust is crucial
- leadership → stewardship and co-ordination
- vision is emergent from the activities
- technological networks and information are open, free, accessible from wherever you are
- capacity is shared as the network/society is open
- it is nomadic – a travelling circus, an ant's nest
- the flotilla produces some of its own stuff, but has an exchange of stuff we make / our skills and services with communities it encounters
- perhaps it has some rich patrons (tithe?)
- flotilla creates 'compost – encourages first stages of growth, a cultural revitalisation/ regeneration project
- there is no (cultural) funding for the whole, but there might be some for the projects, where we partner with funding bodies along the way
- artist status doesn't matter, as the community and the vision generate income for all

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Various Documentation

- preparing for the prehearsal Flotilla Survival Guide
- ship's log kept during prehersal
- post-prehersal debrief notes and interviews with participants:

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